

Ruling leaves immigrants who newly applied for DACA in limbo

By DEEPTI HAJELA, SOPHIA TAREEN and AMY TAXIN
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When the text message popped up on his phone, Samuel Alfaro didn't want to believe it. It said his appointment with U.S. immigration services about his application to join the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, the one he had been waiting on for months, was canceled because of a court order halting the Obama-era deportation protections for those brought to the U.S. as children.

"I thought it was a scam," the 19-year-old from Houston said of the message he received Sunday night, hours before his appointment.



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Samuel Alfaro, pauses between responses during an interview at his home in Houston, Texas, Friday, July 23, 2021.

Associated Press

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Ruling leaves immigrants who newly applied for DACA in limbo

Continued from Front

Alfaro went to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website and "kept checking it, refreshing it every few hours." Later, he got an email, confirming it was true.

Now, he simply feels "a little sad."

Alfaro isn't the only one. Tens of thousands of young immigrants in the country without legal status are in the same position following a July 16 ruling from a federal judge in Texas that declared DACA illegal while leaving the program intact for existing recipients.

The ruling bars the government from approving any new applications, like that of Alfaro, whose parents brought him to the U.S. from Mexico when he was 2, along with his older brother. Immigrants and advocates have said they will appeal.

In a statement, Citizenship and Immigration Services said it "will comply with the court order, continue to implement the components of DACA that remain in place."

It's the latest twist for the program, which has been struck down and revived in a constant stream of court challenges since then-President Barack Obama created it by executive order in 2012.

Former President Donald Trump announced early on that he was ending the program, but a U.S. Supreme Court decision last year determined that he had not done it properly, bringing it back to life and allowing for new applications like the one from Alfaro, who filed at the beginning of the year.

The latest ruling calling DACA illegal involved a lawsuit that had been filed by Texas and eight other states. They said Obama didn't have the authority to create the program and that it was an action under the power of Congress.

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen in Houston agreed, saying in his ruling that "Congress's clear articulation of laws for removal, lawful presence and work



Samuel Alfaro, 19, starts to cook his breakfast at his home in Houston, Texas, Friday July 23, 2021.

Associated Press

authorization illustrates a manifest intent to reserve for itself the authority to determine the framework of the nation's immigration system."

Immigration attorneys say the court decision has renewed fears about the future of the program and once again puts young immigrants in a precarious position.

Attorney Max Meyers with the Mississippi Center for Justice was gearing up to submit DACA paperwork on behalf of 40 young immigrants last week, most of them first-time applicants. But he had to scrap those plans.

"It really just throws everybody back into uncertainty," he said. "Rather than people treat people as humans with foundational needs to go to school and be able to get a job, a judge decided that politics is more important in striking this down."

Advocates were informed that as of last week, Citizenship and Immigration Services had 90,000 new DACA applications pending, according to Astrid Silva, executive director of

Dream Big Nevada.

She said the agency received 50,000 applications in the first three months of the year but made decisions on fewer than 1,000.

After the application period opened in December following the Supreme Court decision, Silva said advocates were patient with the delays, understanding the agency might face a backlog from the coronavirus pandemic or other issues. But as time went on, they started to wonder what might be wrong.

"We started seeing these issues from the get-go," Silva said. "We understood COVID and the mail and UPS, and we had an insurrection and it's Christmas. We were, quite honestly, very patient. I think many of us felt like this was a blessing and we can wait a little bit."

"For us, the frustration has really been since January," she said.

Now, the applications have ground to a halt. Silva said advocates are still encouraging eligible people to apply in the hope their applications will eventually be processed and because

having something pending with immigration authorities is better than nothing. She's been fielding calls from mothers worried about what this means for their children.

"The applications will literally just be held in a box somewhere," Silva said.

Esperanza Avila, 21, sent her application about a month ago and presumes it's among those on hold. While she is counting on the program to help her get a steady job at Home Depot or as a restaurant server while she pursues her nursing degree in Los Angeles, Avila said she isn't losing hope.

"We've been through this already. They brought down DACA, they brought it back up. It's just like ups and downs," she said. "I do think eventually we'll be OK."

DACA supporters say Congress needs to approve legislation that would offer permanent protection to young immigrants. The House has passed a measure that would create a pathway to citizenship, but it's gone nowhere in the Senate. There's also hope

something could be included in budget legislation Democrats want to pass, but it's unclear if that will happen.

Alfaro would love to see it. He's seen the sense of freedom DACA has given his older brother, who initially applied shortly after Obama proposed it. By the time Alfaro was eligible, the Trump administration was in charge, and DACA out of reach.

When Alfaro, the 19-year-old from Houston, submitted his application and hundreds of dollars in fees this year, he thought it was the beginning of a life where he didn't have to constantly look over his shoulder because he lacks documentation.

"You can get a driver's license and not be scared to be pulled over," he said. Alfaro looked forward to being able to build a credit score, get a decent-paying job and maybe move out on his own.

He doesn't know what to do now, other than wait. He's trying to find optimism to hold on to, like the comments he's seeing people post online. □

In shift, GOP ramps up vaccine push as resistance hardens

By JILL COLVIN and
BRIAN SLODYSKO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican politicians are under increasing pressure to speak out to persuade COVID-19 vaccine skeptics to roll up their sleeves and take the shots as a new, more contagious variant sends caseloads soaring. But after months of ignoring — and, in some cases, stoking — misinformation about the virus, new polling suggests it may be too late to change the minds of many who are refusing.

In recent news conferences and statements, some prominent Republicans have been imploring their constituents to lay lingering doubts aside. In Washington, the so-called Doctors Caucus gathered at the Capitol for an event to combat vaccine hesitancy. And in Alabama, Republican Gov. Kay Ivey voiced exasperation as she pleaded with residents to protect themselves.

"Folks are supposed to have common sense," she told reporters. "It's the unvaccinated folks that are letting us down. ... I've done all I know how to do. I can encourage you to do something, but I can't make you take care of yourself." The pleas come as COVID-19 cases have nearly tripled in the U.S. over the last two weeks, driven by the explosion of the new delta variant, especially in pockets of the country where vaccination rates are low. Public health officials believe the variant is at least twice as contagious as the original version, but the shots appear to offer robust protection against serious illness for most people.

Nearly all COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. are now people who haven't been vaccinated. Just 56.2% of Americans have received at least one vaccine dose, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I think they've finally realized that if their people aren't vaccinated, they're going to get sick, and if their people aren't vac-



House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., joined by House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., left, and members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, speaks during a news conference about the Delta variant of COVID-19 and the origin of the virus, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, July 22, 2021.

inated, they're going to get blamed for COVID outbreaks in the future," said GOP pollster Frank Luntz, who has been working with the Biden administration and public health experts to craft effective messaging to bring the vaccine hesitant off the fence. But Luntz, who conducted another focus group Wednesday evening with vaccine holdouts, said there has been a discernible shift in recent weeks as skepticism has calcified into hardened refusal.

"Once you are opposed, it is very hard to change that position. And that's what's happening right now," he said.

Indeed, a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that most Americans who haven't been vaccinated say they are unlikely to do so, with 45% saying they definitely will not and 35% saying they probably won't. Republicans, the poll found, remain far more likely than Democrats to pass on the shots.

Overall, 83% of Democrats but only 51% of Republicans said they had received at least one dose. And among unvaccinated Republicans, just 12% said they were planning to get

the shot, while 32% said they probably wouldn't, and 56% said they definitely won't. For months now, many conservative lawmakers and pundits have been stoking vaccine hesitancy, refusing to take the shots themselves or downplaying the severity of the virus. Republican governors have signed bills protecting the unvaccinated from having to disclose their status and tried to roll back mask mandates. And on social media, disinformation has run rampant, leading President Joe Biden to claim platforms like Facebook were "killing people" — a claim he later walked back.

At a recent conservative gathering, attendees cheered the news that the Biden administration was falling short of its vaccination goals. Invoking the nation's top infectious-disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colo., warned the government: "Don't come knocking on my door with your Fauci Ouchie! You leave us the hell alone."

Others, including former President Donald Trump, have defended those who have chosen not to get vaccinated, stressing that the decision is a personal choice. Instead, they have

pointed fingers at Democrats, suggesting they are to blame for the distrust.

"People are refusing to take the Vaccine because they don't trust (Biden's) Administration, they don't trust the Election results, and they certainly don't trust the Fake News," Trump said in a recent statement. But there were signs that messaging was changing this week, as conservative leaders advocated for the shots. On Fox News, host Sean Hannity implored his viewers to "please take COVID seriously," saying, "Enough people have died." Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley on Twitter encouraged "ALL eligible Iowans/Americans to get vaccinated."

"The Delta variant scares me," he wrote.

Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the House Republican whip, distributed pictures of himself receiving his first dose of the vaccine last weekend after months of holding out. And in Florida, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has been selling campaign merchandise mocking masks and medical experts, this week pointed to data showing the vast majority of hospitalized COVID-19 patients are unvaccinated.

"These vaccines are saving

lives," he said.

But the news conference convened by House GOP leaders on Thursday highlighted Republicans' competing messages on the virus.

Initially billed as an event where Republican doctors in Congress would address the rapidly spreading delta variant, the group instead spent most of its time railing against China and making unverified claims that the coronavirus came from a lab leak in Wuhan, a theory initially popular in far-right circles but now being seriously considered by scientists. They also attacked Democrats, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Biden administration, for not doing more to get to the bottom of the lab leak theory.

"The question is, Why are Democrats stonewalling our efforts to uncover the origins of the COVID virus?" said New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, the No. 3 Republican in the House.

Eric Ward, a senior fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center who studies extremism, blamed vaccine reluctance on "nearly a year-and-a-half of right-wing rage machine rhetoric."

While some Republicans may be using strong words to promote the vaccine, few are proposing new measures to urge vaccination, such as incentives, public information campaigns or more aggressive outreach.

In New Hampshire, where shots have slowed to about 1,000 per week, Republican Gov. Chris Sununu said there are no immediate plans to launch new initiatives. "Right now, it's folks' individual responsibility. If someone hasn't been vaccinated at this point, they've made that conscious decision not to," he said Thursday. "The government's job is to provide that open door. If you want the vaccine, here it is, nice and easy. If you need more information, here it is. So you have every tool in the toolbox available to you and your family to make that decision." □

Trump inaugural committee chair to be released on \$250M bail

By BRIAN MELLEY

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The chair of former President Donald Trump's inaugural committee was ordered freed Friday on \$250 million bail to face charges he secretly worked as an agent for the the United Arab Emirates to influence Trump's foreign policy.

Tom Barrack, 74, will be subject to electronic monitoring and largely confined to his residence after he is arraigned Monday in a New York courtroom. He was arrested Tuesday in Los Angeles near his home.

Barrack is expected to plead not guilty to conspiring to influence U.S. policy on the UAE's behalf during Trump's 2016 campaign and while Trump was president. Barrack, the founder of private equity firm Colony Capital, was among three men charged in the case.

Prosecutors said Barrack used his long personal friendship with Trump to benefit the UAE without disclosing his ties to the U.S. government.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Patricia Donahue in Los Angeles ordered strict conditions for Barrack's release. He must surrender his passport, wear a GPS-monitor to track his whereabouts, limit travel between Southern California and New York City and obey a curfew.

Barrack is charged with



This photo from Tuesday Jan. 10, 2017, shows Tom Barrack peaking with reporters in the lobby of Trump Tower in New York before meeting with President-elect Donald Trump.

Associated Press

conspiracy, obstruction of justice and making multiple false statements during a June 2019 interview with federal agents. Matthew Grimes, 27, a former executive at Barrack's company from Aspen, Colorado, and Rashid al Malik, 43, a businessman from the United Arab Emirates who prosecutors said acted as a conduit to that nation's rulers, were also charged in the seven-count indictment.

Grimes was ordered released on \$5 million bail. Al Malik fled the U.S. three

days after an April 2018 interview by law enforcement and remains at large, authorities said. He and is believed to be living somewhere in the Middle East. Barrack is one of several of the former president's associates to face criminal charges, including his former campaign chair, his former deputy campaign chair, his former chief strategist, his former national security adviser, his former personal lawyer and his company's longtime chief financial officer.

Barrack was an informal adviser to Trump's 2016 campaign before becoming the inaugural committee chair.

He raised \$107 million for the lavish celebration scrutinized both for its spending and for attracting numerous foreign officials and businesspeople looking to lobby the new administration. The inaugural committee was not implicated in the indictment.

After Trump took office, Barrack informally advised senior U.S. government of-

ficials on Middle East foreign policy. He also sought appointment as special envoy to the Middle East or U.S. ambassador to the UAE, prosecutors said.

He relayed sensitive information about developments within the Trump administration to UAE officials—including how senior U.S. officials felt about a yearslong boycott of Qatar conducted by the UAE and other Middle Eastern countries, prosecutors said.

He told al Malik that landing an official position within the administration would enable him to advance UAE interests, prosecutors said.

Such an appointment "would give ABU DHABI more power!" he wrote to al Malik, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors originally sought to detain Barrack because they said he owned a private jet and was a flight risk. They also noted he has citizenship in Lebanon, a country with no extradition treaty with the U.S. □



Red tide uptick spurs respiratory warning at Florida beaches



Tyler Tucker, left, and his father Toliver Tucker collect dead fish from nets into their shrimp boat while Jessica Toliver steers the trawler through the intracoastal waterway where Red Tide is decimating fish populations off Treasure Island, Fla., on Thursday, July 22, 2021.

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — People may experience respiratory problems because of a persistent bloom of toxic red tide off Florida's Gulf Coast, the National Weather Service said Friday.

The service issued a "beach hazards statement" affecting the oceanfront and bay-side shores in Pinellas County from 11:30 a.m. Friday through at least 10 p.m. Saturday. Symptoms include coughing, sneezing and watery eyes.

"People with asthma, emphysema or any chronic lung disease may be more sensitive," the NWS statement said. "Irritation may vary by beach and throughout the day." Red tide occurs naturally in the Gulf of Mexico but can be made worse by the presence of nutrients such as nitrogen, which is often found in fertilizers.

Many experts suspect the red tide outbreak in the Tampa Bay area has been exacerbated by the release earlier this year of more than 200 million gallons (757 million liters) of contaminated water from an old phosphate operation in Manatee County. More than 1,000 tons (1,000 metric tons) of dead marine life have been scooped up in Tampa Bay and nearby coastlines during the outbreak.

Local officials and environmental groups have called on Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis to declare a red tide emergency, but the governor insists adequate resources are in place to deal with the problem. □

Top international official in Bosnia bans denial of genocide

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — The top international official in Bosnia on Friday outlawed denial of genocide in the Balkan country to counter attempts by Bosnia's Serbs to deny the scope of the 1995 massacre in Srebrenica, Europe's only post-World War II genocide.

The International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court for Former Yugoslavia declared the Bosnian Serb killings of more than 8,000 Bosniaks that took place in Srebrenica during the Bosnian War as genocide. But Bosnian Serb officials and neighboring Serbia have refused to accept the designation.

Valentin Inzko, the outgoing head of Bosnia's Office of the High Representative, or OHR, imposed changes Friday to the country's criminal code, introducing prison sentences of up to five years for genocide denial and for the glorification of war criminals, including naming of streets or public institutions after them.

"Hate speech, the glorification of war criminals and revisionism or outright denial of genocide and war crimes prevent societies from dealing with their



A woman visits the memorial cemetery in Potocari near Srebrenica, Bosnia, Sunday, July 11, 2021. Associated Press

collective past, constitute renewed humiliation of the victims and their loved ones, while also perpetuating injustice and undermining interethnic relationships," Inzko, an Austrian diplomat, said in a statement. "All of this causes frustrations, makes the society chronically ill, and prevents the emergence of desperately needed reconciliation."

As the top international

body overseeing implementation of the peace agreement that ended Bosnia's 1992-95 war, the OHR has the authority to impose decisions or dismiss officials who undermine the post-war ethnic balance and reconciliation efforts among the Bosniaks, who are mostly Muslim, Bosnia's Serbs and Croats.

Inzko said he decided to use his powers after waiting for years for Bosnia's politi-

cians to act. He cited a refusal by the Bosnian Serb assembly to withdraw decorations awarded to three convicted war criminals.

"The situation has gotten worse and is now getting out of hand," he said, warning that lack of acknowledgment was "sowing the seeds" for new conflicts. "Therefore, I believe that it is now necessary to regulate this matter with legal solutions."

The genocide in Srebrenica happened after Bosnian Serbs took control over the eastern enclave in July 1995. They executed Bosniak men and boys and dumped their remains into mass graves which were later dug out and reburied to cover the crime. The victims' remains are still being unearthed and identified.

Bosniak politicians and the relatives of the victims hailed Inzko's decision, which was swiftly rejected by Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, who is a member of Bosnia multi-ethnic presidency and the top politician in the Serb entity called Republika Srpska. Dodik threatened to launch a process of "dissolution" of Bosnia, the Klix news portal reported.

"Republika Srpska rejects this, genocide did not happen, Serbs must never accept this," he said.

Dodik has repeatedly criticized the OHR and the West as biased against Serbs in Bosnia. The U.N. Security Council on Thursday rejected a resolution put forward by Serb allies Russia and China that would have immediately stripped the powers of the OHR in Bosnia. □

Russia designates media outlet, reporters, as foreign agents

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian authorities designated an investigative media outlet and several journalists as "foreign agents" Fri-

day, raising pressure on the country's independent media ahead of a September parliamentary election.

The Justice Ministry said it added the online news site

The Insider and five journalists to the list of "foreign agents," a label that envisages additional government scrutiny and carries a strong pejorative connotation that could discredit the recipients.

The Insider, which is registered in Latvia, has published investigations into alleged corruption and abuses by Russian officials, purported Russian covert action in Ukraine and Syria, and the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Navalny, the most ardent political foe of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was arrested in January upon returning from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning that

he blames on the Kremlin an accusation Russian officials reject.

Commenting on the Russian Justice Ministry's decision, the site said it would continue working as usual, operating in conformity with Latvian law.

The Justice Ministry acted under a law that is used to designate as "foreign agents" non-governmental organizations and individuals who receive foreign funding and engage in activities loosely described as political.

Another law is used to outlaw groups deemed "undesirable" and makes membership in them a criminal offense. It has been used to ban 41 groups, including opposition groups, foreign NGOs

and most recently, the publisher of Proekt, an online investigative media outlet.

The Justice Ministry on Friday also designated two Proekt journalists and three other reporters as foreign agents. Two other popular independent outlets, Meduza and VTimes, previously were named foreign agents. VTimes subsequently shut down, while Meduza launched a crowd-funding campaign. Russia also used the law to levy heavy fines on U.S.-funded broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for failing to identify its material as produced by foreign agents. The broadcaster has asked the European Court of Human Rights to intervene. □



In this Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021 file photo, journalists work at a newsroom of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Moscow Bureau in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

Landslides, monsoon flooding kill over 100 in western India

By **ASHOK SHARMA**

Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Landslides and flooding triggered by heavy monsoon rain hit parts of western India, killing more than 100 people, officials and news reports said Friday. More than 1,000 people trapped by floodwaters were rescued.

The dead included 54 killed in four landslides in the Raigad and Ratnagiri districts in western Maharashtra state on Thursday and Friday, according to District Collector Nidhi Chaudhary and state government official Sagar Pathak.

Many of those who were rescued were stranded on rooftops and even on top of buses on highways, Chaudhary said.

Pathak said more than 30 people were missing after the landslides.

Chaudhary said the rain had slowed, but water levels were rising again because of a high tide Friday. Rescuers, however, have reached the worst-hit areas.

Disasters caused by landslides and flooding are common in India during



National Disaster Response Force personnel rescue people stranded in floodwaters in Kolhapur, in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, Friday, July 23, 2021.

the June-September monsoon season, when heavy rains weaken the foundations of structures that are often poorly built.

Twenty-seven people were killed by houses collapsing or being swept away by rushing floodwaters in Satara district, the Press Trust of India news agency re-

ported. It also said more than 20 deaths have been reported from the eastern districts of Gondia and Chandrapur.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was anguished by the loss of lives. "The situation in Maharashtra due to heavy rains is being closely monitored and

assistance is being provided to the affected," Modi tweeted.

Elsewhere, a house collapsed Friday after heavy rains in the Shivaji Nagar area in eastern Mumbai, killing at least four people and injuring eight others, fire officials said.

In Ratnagiri district, 200 peo-

ple were rescued from hilly areas on Thursday after the heavy rains. In the coastal town of Chiplun, home to 70,000 people, more than half the area was flooded, said B.N. Patil, district administrator of Ratnagiri.

The army, navy, coast guard and the National Disaster Response Force were helping in rescue operations, the defense ministry said.

An Indian navy statement said it deployed helicopters to evacuate stranded people and sent rescue teams with boats to the region.

Authorities on Friday sounded an alert in the southern state of Telangana, with heavy rains causing flooding in Hyderabad, the state capital, and other low-lying areas.

Meteorologists said the 30 centimeters (12 inches) of rain that has fallen so far this month in Hyderabad, one of India's information technology hubs, is the most in July in 10 years. The floodgates of one of the main reservoirs, Osman Sagar, were opened for the first time in a decade to discharge excess water. □

Associated Press

Suspected rebels kill 16 in eastern Congo

By **AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO**

Associated Press

CHANICHANI, Congo (AP)

— At least 16 people were killed and eight injured in an attack by suspected Allied Democratic Forces rebels in Congo's North Kivu province, the military said. Others remain missing after the ambush that took place Thursday on a road between the towns of Chanichani and Mayi-Moya, around 45 kilometers (30 miles) north of Beni. The civilians were traveling in a truck that was in a convoy with a military escort. When the convoy was attacked their truck, heavily laden with goods, overturned.

At least 16 people were

killed, the chief medical officer of the Oicha zone, Dr. Jerome Kambale Munuambethe, confirmed. He said others are in critical condition.

"Most of those killed are farmers and traders who came for food," Congo's army spokesman Lt. Anthony Mwalushayi told The Associated Press. "We call for vigilance and to denounce any suspicious person." Resident Kambale Wa Tsongo narrowly escaped the attack.

"We were on our way when we heard the sounds of bullets ... We saw the rebels dressed in green with scarves on their heads begin to shoot," he said. He and the others threw themselves into the sur-

rounding undergrowth to evade the attackers, he said.

To avoid increasing attacks, Chanichani residents are fleeing to the towns of Oicha and Beni. They're appealing for the military to improve security in the region.

Residents of the Beni-Mbau area have called on the Congolese army to strengthen its presence in the Bambuba-Kisiki area where rebels are taking advantage of their absence.

"Elements of the army must be further reinforced in this part to bypass maneuvers of the enemy. The population has confidence in its army. It is ready to denounce any suspicious



Congolese Defense Forces soldiers inspect the scene of an attack near the town of Oicha, 30 kms (20 miles) from Beni, Democratic Republic of Congo, Friday July 23, 2021.

Associated Press

cases," said Bravo Muhindo Vukyulu, a resident.

Eastern Congo has been mired in conflict for more than a quarter-century particularly near its border with Rwanda. Several different armed groups there have vied for control of the region's mineral resources. Earlier this week, suspected

rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces attacked Chanichani.

The ADF, which traces its origins to nearby Uganda, has mounted an escalating number of attacks in and around Beni in the last several years even as the community was struck by an Ebola epidemic. □

Mexico fines candidate's party for role of influencer wife

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's electoral agency fined the party of a state gubernatorial candidate \$2.75 million Thursday, ruling that he got prohibited support from his influencer wife's social media posts.

Winning candidate Samuel García and his wife, Mariana Rodríguez, slammed that decision, claiming regulators were treating Rodríguez like an object with a price.

The dispute has raised questions of electoral fairness, freedom of speech and women's rights. García won the June 6 elections to become the next governor of the northern border state of Nuevo Leon.

García ran for the small Citizen's Movement party, which said it would appeal the fine. García and Rodríguez were also fined about \$22,500.

The couple's supporters say a wife should be able to support her husband. The electoral agency says Rodríguez' social media ac-



In this June 7, 2021 file photo, YouTuber Mariana Rodríguez and Samuel García, the newly-elected governor of Nuevo Leon, attend their victory celebration at the Macroplaza of Monterrey, in Nuevo Leon state, Mexico.

counts are a business, and the law forbids business-people from making in-kind donations. The analogy would be if a candidate's

spouse owned a trucking or catering firm, they would be prohibited from donating food or transportation to the campaign.

"Once again, this seems to me very offensive, that they want to put a price on me," Rodríguez said in a video, referring to a ruling by the

National Electoral Institute, or INE, that the dozens of texts and photos she posted on social media had an aggregate value of almost \$1.4 million.

Normally, authorities fine candidates or their parties twice the amount of an illegal donation to discourage the practice.

Lorenzo Córdova, the head of the institute, said Rodríguez's posts "are a donation in kind in that they gave publicity to her husband's candidacy. That should have been considered what it was, a campaign donation, and it wasn't reported."

Rodríguez said in a statement Thursday she was filing a complaint of sexual discrimination with the country's National Human Rights Commission.

"We women are not accessories. We are not a product or merchandise with a sticker price. The support I gave to my husband is not a 'donation in kind'," she wrote. □

Associated Press

El Salvador seeks arrest of former president for corruption

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Prosecutors in El Salvador have issued an arrest warrant for former president Salvador Sánchez Cerén on charges of embezzlement and money laundering.

Attorney General Rodolfo Delgado said Thursday the charges are related to

crimes allegedly committed when Sánchez Cerén served as vice-president in the administration of Mauricio Funes from 2009 to 2014. Sánchez Cerén went on to serve as president from 2014 to 2019, and is also being charged with illicit enrichment.

The corruption allegedly

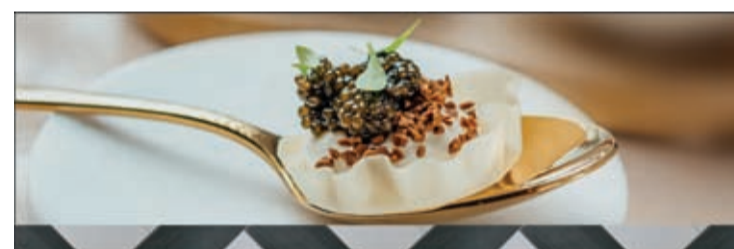
involved \$351 million in government funds that were used to make illegal payments to government employees and their associates. The scam has become known as the "Public Looting" scandal.

"Even though there was no blood spilled as in crimes like homicide, this big pile of money never reached the hospitals, schools, and never was used to buy equipment for police," said Security and Justice Minister Gustavo Villatoro. Both Funes and Sánchez Cerén were members of the FMLN party, founded by guerrillas who fought the government in the country's 1980-1992 civil war. Funes fled to Nicaragua where he was granted asylum in 2016, allowing him to avoid facing trial back home on corruption charges. □



In this Sept. 26, 2018 file photo, El Salvador's President Salvador Sanchez Cerén addresses the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters.

Associated Press



infini
by Urvin Croes

Taste limitless possibilities at Infini, where Chef Urvin Croes and his team explores without boundaries and steps with both feet outside of the box to create his most sensational dishes yet. This meticulously designed restaurant located inside Blue Residences on scenic Eagle Beach is a chef's table concept with limited seating where diners are able to interact with the staff and other guests alike throughout the evening.

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EAGLE BEACH – Tripadvisor just announced the world's restaurants that are Tops for Date Night, and Elements restaurant at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort is honored to be on the cherished list

of winners. At No. 2 in the world for starry-eyed couples, Elements is also the only Caribbean restaurant to win the Travelers' Choice Award for 2021 in the category.

Elements Restaurant Aruba #2 in the World for Best Date Night

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort's restaurant also sizzles as Caribbean's only winner

The world's largest travel review platform reveals that winners like Elements know how to "set the mood for a table of two." In describing Elements, Tripadvisor shared this guest review, it is "the most romantic place on earth for dinner. The server was magical, funny and on point. The dishes were elegant, savory and simply perfect."

Most romantic vacation, perfected

This latest Tripadvisor award joins Bucuti & Tara's previously announced 2021 Travelers' Choice Awards for No. 1 Hotel for Romance – Caribbean, Top 10 Hotel for Romance – World, Top 10 Hotel in the Caribbean and Top 10 Hotel in the Caribbean for the Best Service.

Elements by the elements

Date night diners discover a harmonic blend of romance married to na-

ture at the restaurant on Eagle Beach, affectionately known as one of the "Dream Beaches of the World."

"Every day at Elements restaurant we have the absolute pleasure of witnessing stressors meltaway and romance radiating as couples savor satiating meals, unbridled tranquility and our dreamy beach setting," shared Director of Food & Beverage and Executive Chef Marc Giesbers. "We are so grateful to have our efforts honored with a Tripadvisor 2021 Travelers' Choice Award for Top Date Night in the World."

Sophisticated menus showcase the restaurant's food-forward approach. Elements restaurant offers full menus for vegan and vegetarian for guests' thriving interest in plant-based dining, gluten-free, world cui-

sine and its newest dining experience, the Authentic Aruban & Caribbean Menu. Complementing this is its recent three-peat honor by Wine Spectator, the world's leading authority on wine, by earning the Wine Spectator 2021 Award of Excellence.

The Eagle Beach ocean-front restaurant lets guests select from the laidback luxury of floor-to-ceiling, windowed indoor dining, outdoor dining on the newly remodeled deck, or dreamy Romantic Beach Dining in private palapas. Each places couples right in the island's front row seat to swaying palms dancing with the breeze, the soft murmurs of the shoreline and signature prismatic sunsets.

To learn more, visit Bucuti.com or ElementsAruba.com. □

The Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Costa Linda

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, the Aruba Tourism Authority office had the honor of presenting a token of appreciation to distinguished visitors of Aruba, who have been visiting the island for more than years consecutively.

The honorees were **William J. & Jody Stahl**, residents of Oxford PA.

The lovely couple stated that their top reasons for returning all those years to their beloved island are the warm inviting sun, the

gracious treatment from everyone and the sea & lovely climate

Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, Miriam Rodriguez and Gloria Janga members of Costa Linda bestowed the certificate of the Ambassadors and handed some presents to the honorees and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years on behalf of the Government of Aruba. □



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Take a seat on the Social Sofa

EAGLE BEACH —Omaira Silva is well-known for her masterpieces. The most popular piece, the precious iguana, can be seen at the Aruba's airport. Now, she is finalizing another piece of art the 'Mosaic Social Sofa' at Eagle Beach.

Back in November of 2020, Silva received a phone call from Felipe Da Silva of the MOTA group in charge of the WVB Watty Vos Boulevard, stating that his company needed to install an artistic cement bench to finalize the Eagle Beach Park. Silva was excited and presented immediately the Mosaic Social Sofa project that she knew off and was personally introduced to while visiting Europe in March 2019. During her visit in Europe she located several Mosaic Social Sofas in several cities and communities. Photos were sent to Da Silva and it was a done deal. She would cover or as she calls it 'upholster' the cement bench in Mosaic Art and the theme would be our local Flora & Fauna. The project would have a duration of 6 weeks. Silva started the project on January 17, 2021 and is now completed.

Silva also had introduced the Mosaic Social Sofa to Aruba Art Fair, Tito Bolivar for the section Ban Mosaik project in July 2019, which she is a member of. Having done two Mosaic Art project murals in San Nicolas for the Aruba Art Fair, in September 2016 the Carnival Nymph alongside renowned Chilean Mosaic Artist Isidora Paz Lopez and Carolina Kawal, an Ceramist from Brazil and the 'Cocolishi' Angel Wings in November 2019 as a solo project for which international Mosaic artist Kim Wozniak and Laura

Rendlen were invited. Silva was assisted also by model Sandra Vega for this project. However, due to Covid-19 all came to a halt. Therefore the excitement to do this project on Eagle Beach is understandable.

About the design Flora & Fauna

- Our Shoko, the Aruban Burrowing Owl, (*Athene cunicularia rubensis*) declared our National Symbol in 2012.
- The orange Trupiaal, is also called the Venezuelan troupial and can be found in this region, Curacao and Bonaire,
- The Ruby Topaz Hummingbird for its bright pearly reddish colors and rounded tails and is bigger than the blue tailed emerald,
- The Caribbean Parakeet for us Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax arubensis*) has become the National Bird of Aruba,
- Our Bariga Geel 'chibichibi' aka Bananaquit or Suikerdiefje, or referred as the chickadee of the Caribbean.
- The Kododo blaw (Cnemidophorus arubensis) Aruban Whiptail Lizard aka 'renhagedis' as they swiftly disappear, just love those bright blue spots.
- Our Iguana, locally better known as nos Yuwana, an adult iguana's color normally is a grayish green, while a young iguana is a bright neon green
- The Monarch Butterfly and the small yellow butterflies that always dart in every garden,
- Flora: The greenery in different shades of green our local flora, Kadushi Largo, the Prickly Pear/barbari fig, glass pebbles and marbles for the sparkle, the Bushi Cacti, the Aloe Vera giving it different shades of green and blue, Shrubs and Hedges as background and also added the tropical Hibiscus/Cayena Red flower to bring some more color into this project. The dark green evergreen type leaves. The White Periwinkle flowers or Vinca, as they grow wild on our island and for sure in many gardens. She also added a few yellow Wanglo flowers under the iguana located on the front of the bench, to take it a little out of the camouflage.

Every piece of ceramic tile is hand cut with much detail, placed with precision, passion, dedication, patience, hard work grouting, polishing and all with love for the art to bring it all together.



The selection of the local flora & fauna for this social sofa project was done in a playful, colorful whimsical approach as hope to contribute and help to boost awareness of nature on Aruba to ensure that especially our national birds do not disappear from the Aruban landscape. Most of the detailed mosaic art was created in her home studio and installed on location at the Eagle Beach Park, which attracted many visitors and created many social gatherings. Silva is pleasantly amazed how children interact with the art work, it pleases her immensely.

Just to imagine, parents sitting on a piece of art, stylish bench watching their kids play in the play park, or just when one is on a break from work to sit back and relax or read a book, or just sit in the sun, join a friend for a conversation and suddenly the Mosaic Social Sofa becomes an extension of one's living room.

Silva's dream is to have many Mosaic Social Sofas around the island in communities, bus stops, on a square, schools, mall or downtown created with the members of the community, a great team/friendship building moments.

Her wish is for everyone to preserve our Mosaic Social Sofa, to use extra caution as tiles do break, crack, chip or get damaged, to use TLC, no sharp objects, or use it as a resting place for bicycles, to be socially responsible for this Mosaic Social Sofa to last and be preserved for a long time, just like any equipment in the park. □



ATSA meets new coalition partners MEP & RAIZ

ORANJESTAD — During the past week, new coalition partners MEP & RAIZ have met with dozens of stakeholders, soliciting their input regarding pertinent issues and their expectations of the next coalition government. Each meeting was followed by a press conference and mutually agreed upon comments. ATSA, the Aruba Timeshare Association was among local organizations invited to share its thoughts with the island's future, top decision-makers. The visiting ATSA board members handed in a letter of great interest, and laid out their wish-list for the next four years.

Vacation Ownership in Aruba plays an important role with nearly 40% of the island's total hotel room inventory consisting of timeshare units. Vacation ownership has been during, and especially after the pandemic, the backbone of Aruba's tourism industry. Throughout, vacation ownership has been resilient and boasts the largest market-share growth in both 2020 and 2021. The pandemic is not the first crisis endured by the island. This is the third time that Aruba has seen a decline in tourism, yet its vacation ownership remained strong, with a consistently high level of room occupancy and economic ac-



tivity; Aruba has also seen that timeshare members have a long-term commitment to the island, which is the envy of many Caribbean competitors. The Aruba Time Share Association (ATSA) does not only positively contribute to the Aruban Economy, but it is also dedicated to its workforce, many timeshare properties include yearly cost-of-living wage increases and a majority of properties maintained their employees and protected their salaries during the pandemic. As the voice of Aruba's Vacation Ownership industry, ATSA has compiled Key Priorities for the continued recovery and sustainability of tourism here, in support of the local economy. Some top priorities have remained top priorities for the past 4 years.

Labor Laws: ATSA submitted a list of most important Labor Law tweaks and adaptations, dealing with a

variety of urgent labor issues, from Working Permits, to Retirement Age. **Bubali Plas:** The Sewage Water Treatment plant @ Bubali, is a major concern to the association, it is in a dire state of disrepair and must be urgently addressed, without over-dramatization, it is an imminent threat to tourism.

Beaches & Beach Policy: ATSA expressed its deep concern over the non-sustainable use of Eagle Beach & Palm Beach, from motorized watersports, to suntan lotion. The importance of the beaches cannot be understated. The association called for more responsible watersport and ATV operations by more responsible and conscientious operators, and warned of the decline of the beaches.

Education: ATSA reiterated its great interest in education and in keeping the supply and demand

of the labor force is in balance. Young people must be educated to take their place in the workforce and fill available jobs on the island. The existing workforce needs training, and relevant skills in order to be more productive, work smarter, not harder. ATSA supports innovations, so that Aruba remains a destination of choice, served by highly-qualified workers.

Finance: ATSA wishes to make Aruba more affordable, by bringing down the cost of doing business here. ATSA would like to see a leaner, more sustainable, and waste-free GOA. The reduction of red tape, a comprehensive tax reform, and a more efficient tax collection across the board, are crucial.

Overdevelopment: Affluent timeshare owners are moving away from the island, ATSA warned, due to overdevelopment, they see the island as their Home Away from Home, but notice it becoming overbuilt and overdeveloped. ATSA promotes a quality experience over the quantity of visitors. Due to overdevelopment, ATSA has seen timeshare owners' annual household income drop from \$150K to \$125K, over the past seven years.

Security: ATSA considers the fight against petty-theft

and drug peddling on the beaches and around the resorts a great priority, and wishes to see more Police presence on beaches and in tourist areas.

Environment & Recycling: ATSA wishes to see great focus on laws to protect the environment and the island's natural resources, and wishes to introduce the environmental levy to cruise tourism. Their impact on the environment can no longer be ignored, and they should be made to contribute their fair share. Timeshare owners are interested in more recycling; they also want more protection for NATURE, that attracted them to the island, in the first place.

ATSA took the liberty to summarize what it considers the current and ongoing Key Priorities of business, environment, and tourism, and stands prepared to assist the new cabinet, get involved on any platform, happy to provide feedback, and participate meaningfully, in the spirit of private and public sector collaboration.

ATSA, thanked the members of the new coalition for the opportunity to share, and hopes for the full adoption of its agenda points, in the upcoming 4 years. □

Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you

will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of



mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel

Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

Small businesses lifted by return of summer tourists

By MAE ANDERSON
AP Business Writer

Small businesses in the U.S. that depend on tourism and vacationers say business is bouncing back, as Americans rebook postponed trips and spend freely on food, entertainment and souvenirs.

U.S. states and cities have loosened many of their restrictions on crowd size and mask-wearing, a positive sign for businesses that struggled for more than a year when theme parks and other tourist attractions were shuttered.

Still, the return to a pre-pandemic "normal" is a way off for most. There are few business travelers and international tourists. Many businesses are grappling with staff shortages and other challenges. And if a surge of the more contagious delta variant or another variant of the coronavirus forces states to reenact restrictions or lockdowns, the progress might be lost.

The U.S. Travel Association, a travel industry trade group, predicts domestic travel spending will total \$787 billion in 2021. That's up 22% from 2020 but still down 20% from 2019 levels. The association predicts travel spending won't completely rebound above 2019 levels until 2024.

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, Jenny Kimball, co-owner of the independent hotel La Fonda on the Plaza, with 180 rooms, said her hotel is sold out through the summer and booked about 90% on average for the fall. That's a welcome change from the two or three guests the hotel had at one point as it stayed open during the height of the pandemic.

"It's crazy busy, it's wonderful, everyone is happy," she said.

The clientele is different than prior to the pandemic: There are more families and people working remotely, and they're staying longer, an average of four or five nights compared to two or three.

"Families want to come and stay longer and really vacation and see more of



Heather Bise, owner of The House of Bise Bespoke, poses in the "Art" bedroom, Monday, July 19, 2021, in Cleveland.

the city and more of the museums," Kimball says. Kimball's biggest problem: A shortage of workers in the restaurant, bar and kitchen. She urged vacationers to have patience.

"It's very hard after such a horrible year to have the demand and not be able to serve them, because we don't have 100 percent staffing back yet," she says. Heather Bise owns and runs a 7-bedroom bed-and-breakfast in Cleveland, Ohio, near the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She opened The House of Bise Bespoke in 2019 and catered to international tourists, attracting guests from New Zealand, Botswana, Eastern Europe and other far-off places.

The cancellations started in January 2020 and she refunded guests thousands of dollars.

So, Bise retooled her business model and switched to renting out the whole house. Ohio lifted restrictions on mass gatherings in March, and the Hall of Fame reopened in June. Business has rebounded during the past two months so much so that she's making more than she was pre-pandemic. Demand is so strong she raised prices and switched from serving breakfast and dinner to just

breakfast.

But her guests are now all from the U.S., usually families meeting up for a reunion or wedding parties which now make up 60% of her business. She worries that the wedding business will evaporate after the summer and fall.

"Let's just hope people are having weddings in January," she said.

Many owners are pleasantly surprised by the pick-up in domestic tourists, but still need to see corporate travelers and tourists from overseas before business is back to normal. That could take some time. While improved from 2020, the USTA estimates that spending on business travel this year will be less than half of 2019's \$270 million and international travel spending will total about one-third the \$179 million spent two years ago.

Martha Sheridan with the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau said the Boston tourism industry is relying on "leisure visitors" families traveling to the city to take in attractions, couples vacationing and women taking "girls weekends." That means weekend business is strong, but mid-week business is still "significantly lower than what it would normally be."

That could begin to change, she said, when conventions resume at the end of July.

Because of the pandemic, Boston Duck Tours lost the big groups it usually counts on not only people from international cruises in port or in town for business travel but also students on school field trips. The tour group has offered land-and-water tours in the Boston area every year since 1994.

Business is about 80% of 2019 levels, with 21 of the 28 duck boats which can operate on land and water running at about 75% capacity.

But leisure travelers have come back strong, said Cindy Brown, CEO of the company.

"We weren't sure how busy we would be," she said. "I've been shocked to see how many people are eager to travel, see attractions and get out of their houses."

And so far, tourists have been freewheeling with spending, small business owners say.

Denise Quinn owns The Gilded Oyster jewelry store in Falmouth, Massachusetts, which counts on Cape Cod vacationers for much of its business.

Since May, when Massachusetts dropped its mask

mandate and restrictions on indoor and outdoor gathering capacity, shoppers are coming in droves and spending more.

"Now, it's just great to be here, we've opened up and mask wearing is done," she said. "Vacation rentals and inns are all booked, and people want to treat themselves."

People are spending more in the shop, she said, buying multiple items instead of just one, including gifts for themselves as well as others.

"The average price point is definitely higher," she said. "People come in to treat themselves and get a memento from their time at The Cape."

Quinn says she is concerned that COVID cases are again on the rise and hopes to maintain business as usual even if restrictions are put in place. If necessary, she's prepared to fall back on a mask mandate, online shopping, curbside pickup and home delivery to keep the business running.

Alan Dietrich, CEO of Crater Lake Spirits in Bend, Ore., which has two tasting rooms catering to tourists who come to the area, said he's seen an explosion in demand since pandemic restrictions were fully lifted ahead of the Fourth of July.

"Every minute we're open, we're seeing people coming in," he said. "People have been locked down for the last 14 months, they're dying for something to do. The limiting factor is just staff."

He is also seeing people spending freely. In Bend, the average price of an entree has gone up \$3 and the price of a cocktail has gone up \$1 due to staffing shortages and higher wholesale food prices, says Dietrich, who also sits on the board of Bend's tourism development group.

"No one is balking at the prices at all," he added. "Nobody cares what stuff costs right now, people are just happy to be out and about." □

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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6 Abacus darling
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11 Disconcert 42 Greedy
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Yesterday's answer

- 24 In the lead
25 Volcanic
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AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophies, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-24 CRYPTOQUOTE

G T H E K Q P E R E Y J T C
H E B Y E T G Q C J T N Y Y I D C D E K
B Q V Q P R D T O B R D Q C R J
H D O E G E G S U I T U D Q C D Q K Q

V D C K T G. — C T P D C Y F. I D G K D R
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: EACH OF US FEELS
THAT WE ARE JUST A DROP IN THE OCEAN. BUT
THE OCEAN WOULD BE LESS WITHOUT THAT
MISSING DROP. — MOTHER TERESA



Priest outed via Grindr app highlights rampant data tracking

By MATT O'BRIEN and FRANK BAJAK
AP Technology Writers

When a religious publication used smartphone app data to deduce the sexual orientation of a high-ranking Roman Catholic official, it exposed a problem that goes far beyond a debate over church doctrine and priestly celibacy.

With few U.S. restrictions on what companies can do with the vast amount of data they collect from web page visits, apps and location tracking built into phones, there's not much to stop similar spying on politicians, celebrities and just about anyone that's a target of another person's curiosity or malice.

Citing allegations of "possible improper behavior," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on Tuesday announced the resignation of its top administrative official, Monsignor Jeffrey Burrill, ahead of a report by the Catholic news outlet The Pillar that probed his private romantic life.

The Pillar said it obtained "commercially available" location data from a vendor it didn't name that it "correlated" to Burrill's phone to determine that he had visited gay bars and private residences while using Grindr, a dating app popular with gay people.

"Cases like this are only going to multiply," said Alvaro Bedoya, director of the Center for Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law School.

Privacy activists have long agitated for laws that would prevent such abuses, although in the U.S. they only exist in a few states, and then in varying forms. Bedoya said the firing of Burrill should drive home the danger of this situation, and should finally spur Congress and the Federal Trade Commission to act.

Privacy concerns are often construed in abstract terms, he said, "when it's really, 'Can you explore your sexuality without your employer firing you? Can you live in

peace after an abusive relationship without fear?'" Many abuse victims take great care to ensure that their abuser can't find them again.

As a congressional staffer in 2012, Bedoya worked on legislation that would have banned apps that let abusers secretly track their victims' locations through smartphone data. But it was never passed.

"No one can claim this is a surprise," Bedoya said. "No one can claim that they weren't warned."

Privacy advocates have been warning for years that location and personal data collected by advertisers and amassed and sold by brokers can be used to identify individuals, isn't secured as well as it should be and is not regulated by laws that require the clear consent of the person being tracked. Both legal and technical protections are necessary so that smartphone users can push back, they say.

The Pillar alleged "serial sexual misconduct" by Burrill homosexual activity is considered sinful under Catholic doctrine, and priests are expected to remain celibate. The online publication's website describes it as focused on investigative journalism that "can help the Church to better serve its sacred mission, the salvation of souls." Its editors didn't respond to requests for comment Thursday about how they obtained the data.

The report said only that the data came from one of the data brokers that aggregate and sell app signal data, and that the publication also contracted an independent data consulting firm to authenticate it.

There are brokers that charge thousands of dollars a month for huge volumes of location data, some of which is marketed not just to advertisers but to landlords, bail bondsmen and bounty hunters, said John Davisson, senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center. □

'Superbug' fungus spread in two cities, health officials say

By MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials said Thursday they now have evidence of an untreatable fungus spreading in two hospitals and a nursing home.

The "superbug" outbreaks were reported in a Washington, D.C., nursing home and at two Dallas-area hospitals, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported. A handful of the patients had invasive fungal infections that were impervious to all three major classes of medications.

"This is really the first time we've started seeing clustering of resistance" in which patients seemed to be getting the infections from each other, said the CDC's Dr. Meghan Lyman. The fungus, *Candida auris*, is a harmful form of yeast that is considered dangerous to hospital and nursing home patients with serious medical problems. It is most deadly when it enters the bloodstream, heart or brain. Outbreaks in health care facilities have been spurred when the fungus spread through patient contact or on contaminated surfaces.

Health officials have sounded alarms for years about the superbug after seeing infections in which commonly used drugs had little effect. In 2019, doctors diagnosed three cases in New York that were also resistant to a class of drugs, called echinocandins, that were considered a last line of defense. In those cases, there was no evidence the infections had spread from patient to patient, scientists concluded the resistance to the drugs formed during treatment.

The new cases did spread,



This 2016 photo made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a strain of *Candida auris* cultured in a petri dish at a CDC laboratory.

Associated Press

the CDC concluded.

In Washington, D.C., a cluster of 101 *C. auris* cases at a nursing home dedicated to very sick patients included three that were resistant to all three kinds of antifungal medications. A cluster of 22 in two Dallas-area hospitals included two with that level of resistance. The facilities weren't identified. Those cases were seen from January to April. Of the five people who were fully resistant to treatment, three died both Texas patients and one in Washington.

Lyman said both are ongoing outbreaks and that additional infections have been identified since April. But those added numbers were not reported.

Investigators reviewed medical records and found no evidence of previous antifungal use among the patients in those clusters. Health officials say that means they spread from person to person. □

ARUBA CLEAN



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LeVar Burton: 'Jeopardy!' host gig began 'scary,' ended fun

By LYNN ELBER
AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — LeVar Burton's quest to become the new host of "Jeopardy!" has been a confident, upbeat effort by the actor and those who rooted him on with a petition drive.

But when the day came to tape the first of his week's share of episodes as one of a succession of guest hosts, the show's pace and the challenge of following in Alex Trebek's much-admired footsteps threw Burton off stride.

It made for a rough start to the five back-to-back tapings that begin airing Monday, said the veteran actor known for "Roots," "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and "Reading Rainbow." He turned for advice to wife Stephanie Cozart Burton, who as his makeup artist was on hand to play coach during a production break.

"Being at home, it feels like a really relaxed half-hour, but it's not relaxed at all," he said. "You can't let your focus drop for a nanosecond."

Burton has been watching and assessing the other guest hosts in other words, his competition for the po-



This image provided by Jeopardy Productions, Inc. shows "Jeopardy!" guest host LeVar Burton on the set of the game show.

sition that the Canadian-born Trebek held from 1984 to shortly before his November 2020 death from cancer at age 80.

Art Fleming was the quiz's show's original and only other host, in the 1960s and '70s.

Although Burton had made the show's producers aware of his interest in being considered, his addition to the roster came after a petition backing him as

the new "Jeopardy!" host caught fire (with more than 250,000 signatures to date). He faces other openly eager would-be hosts including NFL quarterback Aaron Rodgers but the actor, director and education and literacy advocate sees himself as a solid match for a game show that rewards knowledge.

Burton spoke with The Associated Press about his wife's on-point advice, why

diversity matters for "Jeopardy!" and what he thinks of his chances for the job expected to be filled this summer, before next season's taping begins. Remarks have been edited for clarity and length.

AP: What was the guest-host experience like?

BURTON: Scary. Really, really, really scary. Did I mention it was scary?

AP: How so?

BURTON: I've jumped out

of airplanes. I've walked over hot coals. This was a real challenge. First of all, because ('Jeopardy!') is singular in the culture and what it means to people as a part of their daily lives. And the fact that there are only two hosts who have ever stood in that spot. The pressure, the natural tendency was to want to live up to Alex's example, his legacy.

I had, like all of the hosts, one day of rehearsal and the following day I shot five episodes of 'Jeopardy!' I came backstage after taping the first episode and I said to Stephanie, 'Well, how did I do?' She said, 'ehhh.' Now, this is a woman who loves me enough to tell me the truth. She said it wasn't me.

AP: How did you adjust?

BURTON: I made it my business for the next four chances at bat to just be myself, to forget about the procedure, to forget about the process, stop trying, stop focusing on the wrong thing. You're not going to be smooth as Alex, let go of that. But what you can bring to the table is you. So that became my point of focus. □

Hemingway Look-Alike Contest returns to the Florida Keys

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) — The 40th edition of an Ernest Hemingway look-alike contest opened Thursday night at an iconic Key West bar once frequented by the author, marking the return of a contest canceled last year amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Some 70 stocky, bearded men resembling the late writer competed in the first of two preliminary rounds at Sloppy Joe's Bar.

The contest's second preliminary round is set for Friday and the 2021 winner is to be chosen Saturday night.

The three-night contest is a cornerstone of the island's Hemingway Days festival, staged around the literary

legend's July 21 birthday to salute his writing talent, legacy and adventurous life.

Hemingway lived and wrote on the subtropical island for most of the 1930s. Thursday night's entrants paraded across Sloppy Joe's stage before a judging panel of former winners including Joe Maxey, a retired Tennessee banker who won the last contest, staged in 2019.

Late Wednesday, a woman from Somerville, Massachusetts, was named the winner of the Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition. Madison Bakalar's "So This Is How We Go" bested 784 other American and internation-

al entries.

Lorian Hemingway, Ernest Hemingway's author granddaughter and founder of the literary competition, said Bakalar's story impressed the judges for its ability to combine universally human emotions about loss with a finessed gallows humor.

Hemingway Days continues through Sunday with events including an offbeat "Running of the Bulls" spoof, a literary walking tour and the Key West Marlin Tournament.

While living in Key West, Hemingway penned classics including "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and "To Have and Have Not." □



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, past winners of the Hemingway Look-Alike Contest, including Chris Storm, right, judge this year's contestants during the first of two preliminary rounds Thursday, July 22, 2021, at Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West, Fla.

Associated Press

Number of NFL players in vaccination process up to 80%

By BARRY WILNER
AP Pro Football Writer

The number of NFL players in the COVID-19 vaccination process has reached 80%, with nine teams having 90% or more of their players in that category.

Dr. Allen Sills, the league's medical director, said Friday that nearly all Tier 1 and Tier 2 team employees those who deal directly with players have been vaccinated. Five teams are at less than 70% of players who have either received one vaccination shot or both. He is optimistic the number of vaccinated players will continue to rise as training camps open.

"I think we are off to an excellent start," Sills said. "Those numbers are much higher than what we're seeing in society as a whole. There has been a lot of movement in that area. As you see players coming to training camp, you will see more players beginning that process (of vaccination)."

Sills cited teams having strong advocates for vaccination among players and coaches, as well as the educational materials available.

"I think that has influenced a lot of players," he said. "I think we are still seeing a lot of positive momentum. Numbers are changing on a day-by-day basis and I think we'll be seeing them day by day going up."

"What matters is that indi-



In this April 29, 2021, file photo, NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, wearing a COVID-19 vaccinated sticker, speaks during the first round of the NFL football draft in Cleveland.

viduals have the most accurate information. Let's not get information from Instagram or Facebook posts.

Let's try to hear from the most reputable professionals. You don't shout anyone into belief here there have to be thoughtful conversations. What we can do is provide the facts and make sure the entirety of the medical facts are presented."

On Thursday, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell sent a memo to the 32 teams warning that forfeited regular-season games could occur for a COVID-19 outbreak caused by nonvac-

inated players.

Dawn Aponte, the league's chief football administrative officer, reiterated that games will not be postponed to avoid roster issues because of the flexibility built in: COVID-19 replacement players; expanded practice squads to 16 players; a three-week minimum stay on injured reserve instead of six weeks; no limit on activating players from IR.

That means 272 games on time within 18 weeks "safely and responsibly," she said. "Flexible and adaptable will continue to be key," Aponte added, noting that Goodell's memo was vet-

ted by people in a variety of NFL roles. "We are committed to playing a full season as scheduled. There is the no-play/no-pay provision (from 2020), which has been agreed to with the players' association and will carry into this season."

"Health and science truly is what drives and guides these decisions," she added.

"And I think we illustrated that last season and will continue to do so. I think we know a lot more this year ... the biggest difference is a vaccination is available." Minnesota has one staff member, Rick Dennison, who is not vaccinated and

reportedly will be released.

"The Vikings continue to hold discussions with offensive line coach Rick Dennison regarding the NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 protocols for training camp and pre-season games," the team said in a statement Friday. "At this time, coach Dennison does not have an exemption to the vaccination requirements of those protocols. We will adhere to the requirements of the protocols and of applicable law."

The league has said that determining who makes the roster can't involve whether a player is vaccinated. Policing such roster moves would be difficult, but Aponte dismissed any conspiracy theories.

"Cutting players is for their performance," she said. "And I don't think clubs will I can't stand in their shoes but I think there are protocols that have been put in place ... that are not restricting their ability to perform. I don't see the two tying together."

Still, it is clear the league and the players' union are strongly advocating vaccinations with every move they make.

"No one is trying to be punitive or anything like that," Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay said.

"Simply, if your choice is not to get vaccinated, it's going to be a much more difficult season." □

Associated Press

Media picks Alabama to beat Georgia for SEC championship

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP)

— Alabama is the favorite to repeat as Southeastern Conference champion while Georgia is the pick to win the Eastern Division in the media's annual preseason poll.

In voting by media covering SEC media days released Friday, the defending national champion Crimson Tide received 84 votes to win the league while Georgia

was second with 45 votes.

The Bulldogs were selected to win the SEC East with 923 points, including 124 first-place votes. Defending division champ Florida was second with 784 points and seven first-place votes. Kentucky was third with 624 points.

In the SEC West, Alabama received 130 first-place votes among the 134 ballots. Texas A&M received 760 points and

LSU 633.

The Tide also led the way with 16 players making the preseason All-SEC teams, with six of the team's eight predicted first-teamers playing on defense.

Georgia and Auburn had 10 preseason All-SEC picks and Texas A&M had seven. The media has correctly predicted the SEC champion eight times since 1992. □



Alabama head coach Nick Saban speaks to reporters during the NCAA college football Southeastern Conference Media Days Wednesday, July 21, 2021, in Hoover, Ala.

Associated Press

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Cleveland's baseball team goes from Indians to Guardians

By **TOM WITHERS**
AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Known as the Indians since 1915, Cleveland's Major League Baseball team will be called Guardians.

The ballclub announced the name change Friday — effective at the end of the 2021 season — with a video on Twitter narrated by actor and team fan Tom Hanks. The decision ends months of internal discussions triggered by a national reckoning by institutions and teams to drop logos and names considered racist.

The choice of Guardians will undoubtedly be criticized by many of the club's die-hard fans, some of whom quickly went on social media to vent.

The organization spent most of the past year whittling down a list of potential names that was at nearly 1,200 just over a month ago. But the process, which the club said included 140



The new Cleveland Indians logo is displayed on a screen next to art work, Friday, July 23, 2021, in Cleveland.

hours of interviews with fans, community leaders, front office personnel and a survey of 40,000 fans.

Owner Paul Dolan said last summer's social unrest, touched off by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, spurred his intention to change the name.

Dolan is expected to provide more details on the choice and background on the change at a news conference at Progressive Field before the Indians host the Tampa Bay Rays.

Dolan said the new name mirrors the city and its people.

"Cleveland has and always

will be the most important part of our identity," he said in a statement. "Therefore, we wanted a name that strongly represents the pride, resiliency and loyalty of Clevelanders. 'Guardians' reflects those attributes that define us."

"It brings to life the pride Clevelanders take in our

city and the way we fight together for all who choose to be part of the Cleveland baseball family. While 'Indians' will always be a part of our history, our new name will help unify our fans and city as we are all Cleveland Guardians."

The change comes as the Washington Football Team continues to work toward a similar makeover. The franchise dropped its Redskins name before the 2020 season. Washington recently said it will reveal a new name and logo in 2022.

Cleveland's new name was inspired by two large landmark stone edifices near the downtown ballpark — referred to as traffic guardians — on the Hope Memorial Bridge over the Cuyahoga River.

The team's colors will remain the same, and the new Guardians' new logos will incorporate some of the architectural features of the bridge. □

Associated Press

Tokyo Olympic flame is the first powered by hydrogen



Japan's Naomi Osaka lights the cauldron during the opening ceremony in the Olympic Stadium at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Friday, July 23, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan.

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Inspired by the sun, the Tokyo Olympic cauldron is designed to be better for the planet. The flame at Tokyo's National Stadium and another cauldron burning along the waterfront near Tokyo Bay throughout the games will be sustained in part by hydrogen, the first time the fuel source will be used to power an Olympic fire.

Previous flames have usually run on propane, al-

though magnesium, gunpowder, resin and olive oil have also been used since the first modern cauldron was lit for the Amsterdam Games in 1928. The torch relay was introduced eight years later for Berlin.

Unlike propane, hydrogen does not produce carbon dioxide when combusted. The Tokyo cauldron is fueled by hydrogen produced by a factory in the Fukushima prefecture that

runs on renewable energy. Propane and hydrogen were both used during the torch relay.

Organizers for the London Games in 2012 touted plans for a low-carbon torch but couldn't get the design right in time. They instead used a mix of propane and butane. Brazilian officials commissioned a smaller cauldron for Rio in 2016 to reduce the amount of fuel needed. □